
LGBT News

The LGBT Resource Center for
the 7 Rivers Region, Inc.

February 2007

Thanks for a Successful Third Annual Meeting and Party!
About 50 members attended the meeting and about 100 lgbt folk and allies stayed to party to Scott Grosskof's DJ music. [Read the minutes here.](#)

It is Time to Look Forward by Chris Olson

This month I'm going to give you my view on how to deal with life as a citizen in a state that presumably sees lgbt folks and lgbt couples as undeserving of the same rights afforded every other citizen.

The election is over. The marriage amendment passed; lesbians and gays in Wisconsin cannot marry - by the authority of our state's constitution. Neither can we mimic marriage in any legal way. What the heck does this mean? Will my power of attorney be honored? Will my partner be allowed to sit at my bedside in the hospital? Will I get paid time off from work when her father dies? What about leave under the family leave act if she gets sick? Should these things matter now? By all means they matter! We all need to keep expecting the same equal treatment as our heterosexual counterparts! The amendment does not prohibit us from expecting the same respect. We deserve this now more than ever. Don't stop protecting yourselves - just like you did before the ban passed. If I've learned anything from these last two years of battling the amendment I've learned this: it's very important to be out as lgbt people and also out as lesbians and gays in committed relationships. Others need to see us and look at us - study us - and come to realize that we are normal, regular and good people.

We have to be proactive - just like we were before any discussion of marriage ever entered into our thoughts. I lamented to a friend on Christmas Eve about how I never really wanted to get married. That is, until all this talk about forbidding me to marry came into play. I used to believe that my relationship with Michelle, my partner of nearly 25 years, was just fine as a "partnership." I didn't want the church/any church to bless our union. We get plenty of validation and support from friends and family. Our neighbors respect us as do most of the professionals with whom we do business. Before the talk of banning marriage - I was happy, even proud, to disassociate from this modern heterosexual institution that was more likely to fail than succeed.

Lesbian and gay couples still can take advantage of the legal system that is in place to protect us. Yes, it costs money - but it is money well spent. Hire a good lawyer and make sure they understand the law when it comes to protecting the rights in a domestic partner situation. Some of these legal tactics may be challenged in court - if someone invokes this marriage/civil union ban. Bring on the challenges! It will be sad and frustrating. It will be a horrible thing to go through - but if our legal protections stand up to these challenges - the ban will be more easily overturned in the future.

Below are the proactive steps that a couple must take to protect their partnership. There are others - but these are the essential steps to put in place now:

- Name each other as beneficiaries to IRA's and retirement plans.
- Buy life insurance naming your partner as beneficiary.
- Add the other as signatory to your bank accounts.
- Title real estate and financial assets as Joint Tenants with Rights of Survivorship (JTWROS).
- Title your automobiles jointly - using "or" not "and". Use the same language with auto and mortgage loans.
- Have valid wills prepared by an attorney.
- Discuss an estate plan if you have assets subject to state or federal estate taxation.
- If you have children - initiate a second parent adoption procedure (yes, you can!).
- If you have children - name the other as legal guardian and custodian in your will.
- Have a current durable power of attorney (prepared by an attorney).
- Have a power of attorney for healthcare (prepared by an attorney).
- Have a living will and advance directives prepared to detail your last wishes for heroic life support measures.
- Consider setting up a trust to protect your joint assets from the claim of others.
- Tell your family (verbally and in writing) frequently about your wishes concerning all of these issues.

Many of these steps are best executed with the help of an attorney licensed to practice in Wisconsin. Your expert attorney will defend her work for you if their documents are ever challenged. Please contact me if you want the rationale behind taking any of these steps. Even a simple mistake or omission can mean huge trouble for you if something happens to your partner. I am also happy to provide referrals to attorneys who know the law pertaining to domestic partnerships - attorneys for whom homophobia is not an issue.

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Center Activities for February 2007

LGBT Movie Night at the Pearl Street Theatre, i.e. The 7 Rivers LGBT Resource Center.

Mark your calendars for our Resource Center's monthly "Movie Night" being held on the 1st Saturday of February, March, April and May 2007. We will be showing lgbt movies at our Center, 303 Pearl Street.

We're providing popcorn but feel free to bring other snacks and a non-alcoholic beverage. \$5.00 suggested donation to the Center.

February 3, 2007
The Incredibly True Adventures of 2 Girls in Love (1995)

It happens every day! Two very different teenage girls (as different as, well, white and black) find themselves falling in love with each other. One is rich, demure and African-American; the other a hell-raising Caucasian tomboy who pumps her own gas. (Stars Laurel Holloman and Nicole Parker) Directed by Maria Maggenti, 94 minutes

March 3, 2007
The Broken Hearts Club: a Romantic Comedy (2000)

The lives of a group of gay friends in West Hollywood revolve around the Broken Hearts, a restaurant run by the fatherly Jack (John Mahoney) and the softball team he sponsors. The friends (Dean Cain, Zach Braff, Andrew Keegan) rely on each other for conversation and camaraderie as they search for love and mourn their many losses. Directed by Greg Berlanti, 96 minutes

April 7, 2007
Desert Hearts (1985)

Uptight literature professor Vivian Bell (Helen Shaver) heads to Reno, Nevada in 1959 for a quickie divorce. While staying with Frances Parker (Audra Lindley) at her ranch to establish residency, Bell meets Parker's adopted daughter (Patricia Charbonneau), a casino worker 10 years her junior. Bell finds herself increasingly drawn to the open and self-assured lesbian, and their developing intimacy releases buried emotions Bell has never explored. Directed by Donna Deitch, 91 minutes

May 5, 2007
Brokeback Mountain (2005)

Two shepherders - Jack Twist and Ennis Del Mar (Jake Gyllenhaal and Heath Ledger) - meet and fall in love while working together near Wyoming's Brokeback Mountain in 1963. Over the next 20 years, their lives take different courses: Jack becomes a rodeo cowboy while Ennis remains a ranch hand. Screenwriter Larry McMurtry's adaptation of a short story by E. Annie Proulx. Directed by Ang Lee, 134 minutes

Ongoing Center Activities

[Weekly Activities](#)

Coulee Region LGBT Group for Adults

We have recently formed a group for persons over age 20 to connect with others in the LGBT community. We look forward to engaging in a variety of activities, from potlucks to topical discussions, to camping. Our primary purpose is to provide a safe space where people can meet and pursue activities that they find meaningful. The group meets every week, and welcomes anyone that is LGBT, questioning their identity, or is an ally. We currently meet on Tuesday's at 6:00 pm, at the Center on 303 Pearl St. If you have any questions or would like to be added to the group's listserv, please call Connie at (608) 784-0452.

GALAXY

GALAXY, a YWCA sponsored program for lgbt youth, meets every Thursday at 6:00 pm at the Center.

Monthly Activities

Gender Queer/Transgender Gathering at the Center:

Do you identify as gender queer? How about Transgender? Do you ever feel like you don't fit in because of your gender identity or expression? Then come to a monthly discussion group at the 7 Rivers LGBT Resource Center. The group meets on the first Wednesday of the month at 7:00. For more information contact: vanroose.kath@uwlax.edu. For upcoming meeting dates, check the Center [website calendar](#)

Genderqueer - A gender variant person whose gender identity is neither male nor female, is between or beyond genders, or is some combination of genders. This person may want to challenge gender stereotypes and the gender binary system.
Transgender - A person who lives as a member of a gender other than that expected based on anatomical sex.

Women's Book Group:

The women's books group changed its schedule and will read **Fingersmith** by Sarah Waters, for February. The discussion will take place at 4:30 on Sunday, February 25, 2007. See the 7 Rivers LGBT Resource Center website calendar for more details: [website calendar](#)

Honor June

The LGBT Resource Center Fundraising Committee is forming a subcommittee to work on an event to honor June Kjome. The June Kjome Event Planning Committee will hold its first meeting on February 8 at 5:30 at Big Al's Pizza in downtown La Crosse. Anyone who is interested in helping plan the event is encouraged to attend. For more information, call the Resource Center at 784-0452.

Wish List

The Center needs your help with some donations of time and items. If you can help, please contact Connie during our regularly scheduled hours or leave a message on the Center answering machine. We'll be happy to pick up any donations.

Here's what we need:

1. 4-5 card tables (for Euchre night and other activities)
2. some stacking or folding chairs
3. a dvd player and tv
4. coffee carafes
5. large coffee urn
6. sturdy computer desk
7. desktop scanner/copier
8. books and videos for our lending library
9. decorations for the center, i.e. pictures or poster that fit our theme and mission
10. bean bag chairs!

Here's what YOU can do:

1. Organize and lead a card night (maybe Euchre?)
2. Organize and lead a movie night
3. Suggest an activity that you would organize and lead!